

*It is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in the garden; it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches. Luke 13:19*

# The Sower

a newsletter for Central Plains Mennonite Conference leaders and pastors

April 8, 2014

**Growing in holistic witness to God's reconciling mission in the world through fellowship, discipleship and leadership.**

**Please forward this newsletter to (or print it for) these congregational leaders:**

Pastors, Elders or Deacons, Central Plains Delegates, Church Moderator, Treasurer, Christian Education Chair, Church Librarian, Missions Committee, Worship Committee, Youth Sponsors

## For Your Prayers: weekly bulletin announcements

Here are weekly prayer requests for each week between now and the next issue of *The Sower*. Please share them with your congregation by whichever method works best, whether it be in your bulletin, in the pastoral prayer or some other way. *Thank you!*

### For Sunday, April 13 Palm Sunday

Pray that the Holy Spirit would continue to transform the members of Central Plains into the likeness of Christ as we commemorate the passion of our Lord this Holy Week.

### For Sunday, April 20 Easter

Pray that our leaders will experience rest and renewal at the Annual Leaders Retreat for pastors, chaplains and their spouses taking place next weekend at St. Benedict Center in Nebraska with April Yamasaki.

### For Sunday, April 27

Pray for the tour group that David and Shana Boshart are accompanying to the Middle East between now and May 3.

### For Sunday, May 4

Pray for congregations in Central Plains who are in a pastoral search process.

### For Sunday, May 11

Pray for Youth Ministry Council, a gathering of Mennonite Church USA youth sponsors and pastors for resourcing, networking and support. They meet in Kansas City Monday through Thursday of this week.

## Finance Update

We had a good month in March with income marginally exceeding expenses. Income was at \$36,215.64 and expenses were \$35,482.66, creating a small surplus of \$732.98. As a result, our overall deficit is now \$1,336.77 heading into the final month of the fiscal year when we typically have higher expenses than other months. We continue to see God at work in Central Plains in many different ways, and we are very thankful for your continued support. Let's end the year in the black! Thank you. —*Stewardship Task Group*

## Staff News

April 12 David attends Outreach & Service Committee in Cedar Falls.

13 David preaches at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson, Nebraska. Shana will accompany him.

14-16 Shana will be in Freeman, South Dakota.

24- May 3 David and Shana will be on the trip to the Middle East.

25-27 Tim attends Annual Leaders Retreat at St. Benedict Center, Schuyler, Nebraska.

May 12-15 Shana attends Youth Ministry Council in Kansas City, Kansas.

## Leaders Retreat: Register now

**Friday, April 11 is the registration deadline** for the Annual Leaders Retreat on Sacred Pauses with April Yamasaki.

Find all the information you need and *register online* on our web site. Go to “CPMC at Work” → Events → [Annual Leaders Retreat](#).

## Youth Ministry Council

Early bird registration has just passed, but there is still time for youth pastors and sponsors to register for Youth Ministry Council 2014 in Kansas City May 12-14. See a message from our denominational minister of youth and young adults, Rachel Springer Gerber, and find more information [at this web page](#). Please join us! —*Shana Peachey Boshart*

## WDC Library

### Shalom Reader' Club books available through the Conference Resource Library!

We are happy to support Central Plains efforts to encourage children and families to be readers of peace literature through [Shalom Readers](#). Several churches have contacted us to send a Box of Books specifically from the Shalom Readers list. We can do that - we have about 80% of the entire list! We are here to serve You! Call or email Marlene Bogard at [crlib@mennowdc.org](mailto:crlib@mennowdc.org) or 316-283-6300.

**There's an app for that!** New: an APP for your smart phone (Apple or Android) or tablet is now available for the Conference Resource Library Catalog.

1) Go to the App Store (iDevices) or go to the Play Store (Android) and search for the 'Atrium on the go' application.

2) Download the App and add this information in appropriate spaces:

Server: mennowdc.booksys.net Port: 80 Library: crl

3) Voila!

—*Marlene Bogard, WDC Library Director*

## Support IBA by observing IBA Sunday April 27

Sunday, April 27 has been named IBA Sunday by IBA tutors. Your congregation is invited to join in a church-wide fundraising effort for Instituto Bíblico Anabautista (Anabaptist Biblical Institute) the last weekend of April. By joining in you will be supporting leadership education for Hispanic Mennonites. You may also take this opportunity to become an annual IBA sponsor. Churches and small groups are encouraged to find creative ways to raise monies for IBA. Some possible activities might be a garage sale, a bake sale, a fund-raiser meal, a special offering or another idea that fits your small group or congregation.

Every gift helps. Tuition covers less than a third of the actual cost of providing Hispanic Pastoral and Leadership Education for more than 300 students every year. IBA has been blessed by many supportive congregations and individual gifts this year and wants to express its thanks.

Give online at [MennoniteEducation.org](http://MennoniteEducation.org).

## Shine: Living in God Light is coming soon!

*Shine* is a dynamic Sunday school curriculum for age three to grade eight that engages Christian communities in their life together. Allow it to inspire your group too! It will be released for use beginning Fall 2014 from MennoMedia.

Shine...

- calls children to experience the transforming power of God's love.
- nurtures trust in God and invites children to follow Jesus.
- encourages imaginative, interactive biblical storytelling.
- explores the meaning of the Bible within the gathered community.
- cultivates the inner life of the Spirit through spiritual practices.
- expresses faith through lives of compassionate peacemaking and service.
- invites all ages to shine God's light in the world.

Why choose Shine? This curriculum will include spiritual practices, a peacemaking emphasis, interesting, engaging activities, reflection and wondering times, and thoughtful Anabaptist theology. See more at: <http://shinecurriculum.com/about/what-is-shine/>.

## Seminary preview days at AMBS

Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary will host one more Seminary Preview Days this spring: April 25. Meet faculty and students, sit in on classes and community gatherings, talk with admissions staff study programs, financial aid and the admission process. Register for AMBS Preview Days at [www.ambs.edu/admissions/visit-ambs.cfm](http://www.ambs.edu/admissions/visit-ambs.cfm). AMBS also welcomes visitors at any time. Contact the admissions department to schedule a visit: [admissions@ambs.edu](mailto:admissions@ambs.edu) or 800.964.2627.

**Remember, Central Plains Pastoral Leadership Committee has scholarships available for seminary study!** Contact Susan Janzen at [sejanzen@msn.com](mailto:sejanzen@msn.com) for information or [click here for info on the web](#).

## AMBS Webinars

### Understanding Anabaptist Approaches to Scripture: What's Different and Why? ♦

Wednesday, April 30, 1:00-2:30 p.m. CDT ♦ Presenter: Loren Johns

Early registration deadline April 24.

In the 16th century, Anabaptists approached Scripture in ways that were both similar to and different from their fellow Catholics and other Protestants. This webinar will seek to understand those similarities and differences in light of today. Along the way we will be learning what wisdom we can gain from both our Anabaptist forebears and from cross-cultural Bible study today.

Register at [www.ambs.edu/churchleadershipcenter/Webinars.cfm](http://www.ambs.edu/churchleadershipcenter/Webinars.cfm).

## Online Short Courses

AMBS is now offering “short courses” online for new Anabaptists and people seeking to deepen their ministry. Join a diverse community of learners in these brief and potent courses on Anabaptist history, thought and witness. Courses last six weeks each. Readings and discussion are comparable to seminary-level work, assuming critical thinking skills and some previous academic study. No credit will be awarded, but Continuing Education Units are available to those who complete course requirements. The next course offered is:

**Mennonite Polity**, taught by **David Boshart** and Janeen Bertsche Johnson from May 7–June 17, 2014.

[Read course description and register.](#)

## Upcoming Events

**Central Plains Annual Meeting** will take place June 19-22, 2014, at Mt. Pleasant, Iowa.

**Youth Escape 2014** will take place the weekend of August 1-3, 2014, in central Iowa.

**Conference Board** meets August 22-23, 2014, in Freeman, South Dakota.

**Conference Board and Committees** meet at Crooked Creek Christian Camp November 14-15, 2014.

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The mission of Central Plains Mennonite Conference is to create settings for our congregations and partners to grow in holistic witness to God's reconciling mission in the world by developing leadership, encouraging fellowship and promoting lifelong discipleship.